



Lesson 5 HOW TO COME UP WITH IDEAS







MANGA IN A NUTSHELL

How to Come Up with Ideas for Manga!

Let's say the theme is "shit." A beginner might come up with something obvious, like a garfield image of a huge pile of shit with a comment in the margins like, "What a big surprise." Now how is the reader supposed to respond to this? It's like a nutty sushi chef throwing up a slab of tuna ten feet long for his

customers to eat. He might be offering "the material," but it's not a good "idea."

So how do you turn your material into a wonderful idea? There are five methods:

(1) **Reversal:** Contradict the normal thought process (2) **Expansion:** Exaggerate a certain aspect of the theme (3) **Twist:** Take a different point of view—you might find something that wasn't there before (4) **Association:** Play off a resemblance, like between clay and crap (5) **Juxtaposition:** Look for strange combinations, like for instance, toilets and tea ceremonies





THAT
WASN'T
AN
IDEA!



THE METHOD IS JUST A TECHNIQUE!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO APPLY IT AND
COME UP WITH AN INSPIRED AND
BRILLIANT IDEA THAT RESONATES.
A BAD IDEA DOESN'T EVEN QUALIFY AS
AN IDEA!



ALL RIGHT.
IF "REVERSAL"
DOESN'T WORK,
THEN I'LL TRY
"EXAGGERATION"...



A
GIANT
BANANA
PEEL!



GO FURTHER.
WHAT ABOUT
THIS
SO-CALLED
"GIANT
BANANA
PEEL?"



A GIANT
BANANA
PEEL ON A
GIANT
BANANA
PEEL
AND
FALLS
DOWN!



THERE'S
NO
DIFFER-
ENCE
BETWEEN
THAT
AND
YOUR
FIRST
IDEA!



AAARGH!
IT LOOKS LIKE
I'M GOING TO
HAVE TO COME
UP WITH AN
EXAMPLE OF
MY OWN!



OKAY. A STUDENT
HAS JUST RETURNED
FROM SEEING HIS
COLLEGE-ENTRANCE
EXAM RESULTS.
HIS MOTHER ASKS
HIM, "SO WHAT
HAPPENED?"





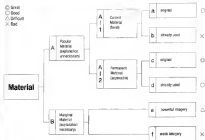


MANGA ADVICE



Judge not!

- Great
- Good
- △ Fair/ok
- ✗ Bad



Misusing Ideas?

There are alot of manga artists who go around screaming as a way to make excuses for themselves: "There's just no good material out there!" Then they try to find a way not to work by feeding from their editors or by misrepresenting. They're not really running out of material though. They just don't have any ideas. Let's put it this way: as long as you have the methods down (i.e. the "cooking" technique) you can apply it to anything, whether it's fish, pork, steak, or whatever.

Your supply of material, actually, is infinite, but you must choose the appropriate material. How do manga artists decide what material is appropriate though? You could call it a matter of conscience, but before we get metaphysical by bringing in Jesus (as that, heh, heh, some tricks that even monkeys can understand) once you learn these you'll save yourself a lot of trouble.

First, take a look at the diagram. All material can be divided roughly into two types.

- A) "Popular Material"—doesn't need explanation
- B) "Marginal Material"—needs explanation

Now then, let's consider "Dais" as (A) and "Kobayashi Shiro"

(writer is chief of Shogakukan, Inc.) as (B). Even an old woman living in the farthest town (A) but when it comes to (B) you have to explain to the reader "He's the story editor of the manga magazine *Big Comics Shiro*." So it's useless material (unless the manga was created for *Kobayashi Shiro Monthly*).

(A) might be more appropriate for the general reader but we have to be careful.

With popular material there's current (A1) and permanent (A2) material. Since current material is often effective in its immediate application, and can provide you with wonderful results it disappears rapidly—no the danger of "food poisoning" is high. For instance, Dais Harada was (A) in August of '86, but by September he was (B) and anyone using him now would be considered a misfit.

The best material is (C) but like crude oil, there's only a limited supply. So we conclude that the safest, most reliable material is (B), but merely juxtaposing this permanent material with the misconception that "it's always been around and still works" will bring about a rapid decline to your career.

If you're going to compete in a tournament "Dis-impressionate control" you should at least be willing to train yourself to "imitate a fan impressioning this while watching a professional Dis-impressionate."

Q

An editor once dismissed my work, saying that all my ideas were "vulgar." Should I avoid vulgar material?

■ Signed,
Oscar Joe, Chile



A:

If all vulgar material were forbidden, then the basic foundation of the entire manga industry would collapse, and both Professors Aizen and Tsukune would find themselves unemployed and out on the streets.

In my humble opinion, "creative work" is always based on a certain dose of disdain towards what's considered "normal." So long as exposure of reproductive organs and excrement is prohibited in public places, there exists a purpose for vulgar material. Only when pornography is completely accepted will vulgar material disappear. As law-abiding citizens (and fans of pornography), then, we must keep a close and faithful watch over our own and fellow citizens' conduct.

To get back to your question... the only decision worth considering is "interesting works" and "boring works." As long as it's interesting, then it doesn't matter whether the material is vulgar or not.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not 100% in support of vulgar material. Vulgar material can be just as boring as it can be interesting, and the former is just worthless.

Judging from your pen name, I'm guessing your manga falls under the "boring material" category. So I advise you not to use ideas like "Come say hello to Mr. Elephant" and drawing a dick.

Think of all the millions of vulgar works that have been shown in the past. The fact that there have been so many means that, to a certain extent, vulgar material is part of the norm. Therefore, if you're going to use vulgar material, you'll have to find a way to regulate its normality!

To put it in extreme terms: come up with vulgar material that's not about either tits or shit. I moderate by looking at photographs of voluptuous female registers. That's the kind of dedication you need to come up with good vulgar ideas.





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